

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8190

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5486

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT PROGRAM NOT CHALLENGED BY ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY: THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC COMPLETED DEBATE ON THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT PROGRAM. AUGUST 12. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES DID NOT PRESENT A REJECTION MOTION. THE FINAL DAY OF DEBATE ON THE PROGRAM WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY A SHARP EXCHANGE BETWEEN COMMUNIST LEADER ALVARO CUNHAL AND PRIME MINISTER SOARES. CUNHAL DECIDED AGAINST PRESENTATION OF A REJECTION MOTION FOR TACTICAL REASONS, BUT ISSUED VEILED THREATS. IN SUM, THE PS HANDILY PASSED THE FIRST HURDLE IN SOARES'S BOLD ATTEMPT TO GOVERN WITH A MINORITY.
END SUMMARY.

1. GOVERNMENT PROGRAM UNCHALLENGED: ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC
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COMPLETED DEBATE AUGUST 12 ON THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT PROGRAM. THE

OPPOSITION DID NOT OFFER A REJECTION MOTION. THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM IS ACCEPTED UNLESS A REJECTION MOTION OBTAINS A MAJORITY VOTE. THE GOVERNMENT NEED NOT, AND DID NOT, SEEK A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

2. CONSENSUS ON PS GOVERNMENT: THE FINAL DAY OF THE MARATHON DEBATE ON THE SOARES GOVERNMENT PROGRAM CONCLUDED WITH PRESENTATIONS BY PARTY LEADERS AND PRIME MINISTER SOARES. HIGHLIGHTS OF PARTY PRESENTATIONS FOLLOW:

-- PPD: SA CARNEIRO ADOPTED A POSITION TOWARD THE SAORES GOVERNMENT OF "NO REJECTION OF CONFIDENCE," AND "HOPE AND EXPECTATION." IF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT SHOULD FALL, DEMOCRACY WILL NOT HAVE FAILED; A PS GOVERNMENT IS NOT YHE ONLY POSSIBILITY.

-- CDS: FREITAS DO AMARAL SAID THE CDS DID NOT SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, BUT WOULD NOT PROVOKE A NEW CRISIS BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE CDS OFFERED ITS FULL SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST ANY THREATS FROM ANTI-DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT.

-- PCP: ALVARO CUNHAL HAD SEEN MANY OF HIS RESERVATIONS REGARDING THE PROGRAM CONFIRMED IN THE SUPPORT OFFERED BY "RIGHTIST" FORCES. PCP COULD HAVE PROPOSED A MOTION OF REJECTION, BUT "DECIDED IT COULD BEST PROTECT WORKER INTERESTS AND GUARD AGAINST RIGHTIST GAINS" BY NOT DOING SO. NONETHELESS, CUNHAL WARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR THE WORKERS.

-- UDP: ACACIO BARREIROS SAID UDP WOULD DEFEND ITS POSTIONS "IN THE STREETS." THE PS "7TH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT" IS ONLY A TRANSITION TO A RETURN OF THE "FASCISTS."

-- PS: SALGADO ZENHA SAID "THE FAILURE OF ANY PARTY TO PRESENT A MOTION OF REJECTION MEANT THAT ALL RECOGNIZE THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS PROGRAM BEST SERVE THE NATIONAL INTEREST."

3. SOARES REPLY: IN THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY TO THE DEBATE, MARIO SOARES MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:
-- THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT FEAR THREATS, AND THE PCP SHOULD BEAR THAT IN MIND;
-- THE SOCIALISTS WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE SALAZAR

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REGIME AND AGAINST "GONCALVISM" WOULD NOT ACCEPT LESSONS ON LIBERTIES FROM THE COMMUNISTS.

-- THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE DOMINATED BY ANY OUTSIDE POWER, IN CONTRAST TO CUNHAL'S ALLEGIANCE TO MOSCOW;
-- THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO GOVERN FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

4. COMMENT: THE FIVE DAYS OF DEBATE, CARRIED LIVE ON TV AND COVERED EXTENSIVELY IN THE PRESS, GAVE A

BOOST TO THE SOARES GOVERNMENT. ONLY THE UDP
AND THE COMMUNISTS PRESENTED STRONG OBJECTIONS. FOR
TACTICAL REASONS, THE COMMUNISTS BACKED AWAY FROM AN
OUTRIGHT CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. GOVERNMENT
LEADERS SOARES AND EDUCATION MINISTER SOTTOMAYOR CARDIA,
WERE OUTSPOKEN IN DESCRIBING THEIR INTENTION TO DEAL STRONGLY
WITH COMMUNIST PROVOCATIONS. THE PPD AND CDS PRESENTED SEVERAL
AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT, BUT MANY MORE AREAS OF AGREEMENT WITH
THE GOVERNMENT. SOARES NOTED SA CARNEIRO'S NEW, MORE REASON-
ABLE STYLE. GEN GALVAO DE MELO, A RIGHT-WING RALLYING POINT
FOR MANY, SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT AND ABSOLVED SOARES OF
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE "ERRORSOOF DECOLONIZATION." IN SUM,
THE PS HANDILY PASSED THE FIRST HURDLE IN SOARES'S BOLD ATTEMPT
TO GOVERN WITH A MINORITY.
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